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66% OF FOOD GRAINS MEANT FOR MIGRANTS NEVER DISTRIBUTED

The Centre says only 34% of food grains allocated to stranded migrants could be distributed till August 31

2.67 LAKH MT OF FOOD GRAINS GIVEN AWAY

In May, the Centre had allocated eight lakh tonnes of food grains under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat package for migrant workers stranded due to the lockdown. However, till August 31, only about 2.67 lakh metric tonnes of grains were distributed. In the meantime, there were many reports of stranded migrant workers dying of starvation | P9

STATES IDENTIFIED 2.8 CR BENEFICIARIES

- In the absence of data on stranded migrants, the govt put the number of estimated beneficiaries at 8 cr (10% of 80 cr migrants)
- Later, the state governments put the number of stranded migrants who could benefit from the scheme at 2.8 crore
- Until Aug 31, grains were distributed to about 2.67 crore people

5 kg
OF FOOD GRAINS PER MIGRANT PER MONTH UNDER THE PACKAGE

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Members of farmers' organisations stage a protest against the Centre over agri-related ordinances, in Patiala on Saturday | PTI

Hire-and-fire norms for firms with 300 staff

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Centre on Saturday introduced three legislative proposals of the Labour Ministry in the Lok Sabha, allowing companies with up to 300 workers to adopt the controversial hire-and-fire policy. Earlier, only companies with less than 100 employees were allowed to retrench workers without government permission.

The proposed changes are aimed at giving flexibility to state governments to frame industry-friendly labour laws.

The three legislative proposals are the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020; the Code of Social Security, 2020; and, the Industrial Relations Code.

The Code on Wages Bill was passed last year. Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar withdrew similar bills which were introduced last year, which were referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee. The Opposition slammed the government for trying to make radical changes in labour laws without holding consultations with stakeholders.

Congress MP Manish Tewari said the mandatory pre-legislative consultation hasn't been held for the three bills. He also stressed that there are definition nightmares in the bills.

RSP MP N K Premchandran said the bills are extensive, and their copies should have been provided to the MPs two days in advance.

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said the bills fail to address the interests of the inter-state workers. He singled out provisions to allow the states and the Centre to lower the threshold for lay-off and retrenchments. He also noted that the bills are discriminatory, for there's no mention of women's welfare.

However, Gangwar said the government has accommodated 74% of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee, adding that 29 labour laws have been simplified into four labour codes.

NUMBERS GAME
A look at which way various parties are expected to vote

245 Total strength of RS	2 Vacancies

POLITICAL PARTIES OPPOSING THE BILLS	
Congress	40
Trinamool Congress	9
Telangana Rashtra Samithi	7
Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	7
Shiv Sena	3
Rashtriya Janata Dal	5
Shiromani Akali Dal	3
Samajwadi Party	8
Aam Aadmi Party	3
Bahujan Samaj Party	4
Left parties	6
Jharkhand Mukti Morcha	1
Nationalist Congress Party	4
Total	**100**
PARTIES IN SUPPORT	
Bharatiya Janata Party	86
Biju Janata Dal	9
Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party	6
Telugu Desam Party	1
All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	9
Total	**111**

Status of some smaller parties having a dozen MPs not known

14 On leave due to ill health | 8 Rajya Sabha MPs tested positive

VIRUS THREAT MAY CUT SHORT MONSOON SESSION

New Delhi: As Covid-19 cases among MPs rise, official sources said the ongoing monsoon session of Parliament may end by the middle of next week. A final decision will soon be taken by the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs. After some MPs tested positive during the session, some opposition parties conveyed that conducting the full 18-day session could be a risky affair.

Protests mount as RS to take up farm bills today

BJP reaches out to regional parties, Cong wants select committee to peruse bills

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Rajya Sabha is set to witness noisy scenes on Sunday as three contentious farm bills will come up for discussion and voting. While the Centre is reaching out to regional parties to muster support, the Opposition wants the bills referred to a select committee for further deliberation.

The farm bills in question are Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill; Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill; and, Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill.

While the Centre hopes the bills will sail through, it is going to be a numbers game as some regional parties have not indicated which way they will vote. Plus, around two dozen Rajya Sabha members are absent on health grounds, which will bring down the strength of the House.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has issued a whip to its MPs to be present on Sunday. In the House of 245 with two vacancies, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has 111 while the Opposition has around 100. The Biju Janata Dal, YSR Congress, and the AIADMK have previously supported the Centre and are expected to extend support this time too, but NDA ally Shiromani Akali Dal has announced it will vote against the bills.

Considering the far-reaching impact of the proposed laws on the farming community, the Opposition wants the bills to be discussed threadbare and states' inputs also be taken into account, as agriculture is a state subject.

Congress leader K C Venugopal has submitted a notice to the Rajya Sabha secretariat to refer the bill to the select committee. A few other MPs have also given similar notices.

The Congress has appealed to other opposition parties to vote against the bill. The party has also called a meeting of its all general secretaries, state incharges and the six-member advisory committee to Congress chief Sonia Gandhi to discuss the future course of action.

Other opposition parties are also shaping strategy to oppose the farm bills.

While the Centre has insisted the bills will help small and marginal farmers sell their agriculture produce at competitive price, the Opposition says the move will do away with the minimum support price (MSP) system and benefit only big corporates.

Claiming the farm bills undermine the food security system, Congress leader P Chidambaram on Saturday urged Opposition parties to collectively oppose the bills so that they do not become law in their present form.

EXPRESS READ

Students can't visit schools till Sept-end

Bengaluru: A day after announcing that schools will open from September 21, the State Government on Saturday said students of Classes 9 to 12 will not be allowed to attend classes till September-end. Principal Secretary, Primary and Secondary Education, S R Umashankar, said that as the Covid-19 spread is not reducing, it was decided that it is not good for students to visit schools. Further plans will be made based on circumstances, he added.

BIG PICTURE | P2

WITH THIS ISSUE

INDIA'S MOST POWERFUL STAR

PLUS 12 PAGES MAGAZINE

IPL 13
BACK IN YEL-LOVE AGAIN

Ambati Rayudu top-scored with 71 as Chennai Super Kings defeated Mumbai Indians by 5 wickets in the IPL opener in Abu Dhabi on Saturday

P13

Ministerial hopefuls edgy as CM awaits nod for cabinet expansion

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

EVEN as the ministerial aspirants wait for word from the party bosses on expansion of the Karnataka Cabinet, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, who returned from a "fruitful" visit to New Delhi on Saturday, said he plans to take up the exercise before the start of the legislature session on Monday. But with just a day left, party sources said they were unsure if the expansion can be done before Monday.

The Yediyurappa Cabinet currently has 28 ministers, including the CM, and six berths are still vacant. While MLCs M T B Nagaraj, C P Yogeshwar and R Shankar are likely to be inducted into the ministry, the names of senior leaders Umesh Katti and Aravind Limbavali are also doing the rounds.

While the CM is hoping to get the nod before the assembly session begins, sources close to him said the party top brass is in no hurry and the cabinet expansion may happen only after the session. P5

SUNDAY INTERVIEW

'Confident of defending our case in the House'

AS the Opposition Congress is preparing to put the government on the mat on a number of issues, including amendments to the Land Reforms Act, APMC Act and handling of the Covid-19 situation, "the government is ready to defend its case in the House and get the bills passed", Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister **J C Madhu Swamy** told *The New Sunday Express* in an interview. FULL INTERVIEW | P 3

Covid scare: House may see thinner attendance

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

THE Covid-19 pandemic is likely to cast its shadow over the proceedings of the state legislature, which begins on Monday, with many ministers and legislators testing positive for the coronavirus.

Just two days ahead, Deputy Chief Minister Dr C N Ashwath Narayan tested positive on Saturday. Many senior legislators may also not attend the session owing to health concerns.

All the ministers and legislators will have to take a Covid test before they can attend the session. Ashwanth Narayan, who took test on Saturday, said he is asymptomatic and will be under home isolation.

In the last 15 days, six ministers have tested positive for Covid-19. This apart, at least 15 MLAs of different parties have caught the virus since August-end. With six of his ministers out of action, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa was advised to assign the task of answering questions, related to those ministries, to other ministers. P7

Tiger preys on young jumbo in Bandipur

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

WHEN was the last time you heard of a tiger taking on an elephant in the wild? The reaction will most likely be of surprise.

On September 18, Karnataka Forest Department officials found the carcass of a juvenile elephant which had become the meal of a tiger in Bandipur Tiger Reserve's Kundakere range. Forest officials say that while this is not rare, it is not common either. Just the previous day, a similar incident was reported in the adjoining Theppekadu range of Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu.

Bandipur Tiger Reserve Director T Balachandra said the juvenile elephant, aged around 5-6 years, was injured and left behind by the herd. Seizing the opportunity, the tiger had preyed on the young elephant. The autopsy, conducted by veterinarians the next day, also confirmed that the juvenile had died under natural circumstances and there was no foul play. P7

THE JUDGE WHO LET HER JUDGEMENTS DO THE TALKING

JUSTICE RUMA PAL & DHVANI MEHTA

IN India, we are not used to public outpourings of grief at the demise of judges. The passing of a judge is marked by respectful tributes, usually from the bar and bench, editorials celebrating the judge's career, and perhaps a memorial lecture that attempts to preserve their legacy. We might wonder, then, at the overwhelming sadness with which the news of US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death at the age of 87 has been met. This is partially explained by the fundamentally different nature of judicial appointments in the United States and the intensely political role in which judges are cast.

Justice Ginsburg believed her very life to be a bulwark against the liberty-eroding machine of the Trump administration. Days before her death, she told her granddaughter that it was her fervent wish not to be replaced until a new President was installed. Apart from this, however, what is also being mourned is the loss of a feminist icon, an exemplary judge who demonstrated the power of incremental legal change, and one of the last bastions of collegiality in a hyper-polarised age. These are lessons that have resonance across the world today. She continues to be a wise teacher even in death, as her remarkable life gives us the opportunity to reflect on effective ways of protecting human rights.

RUTH BADER GINSBURG
MARCH 5, 1933 - SEPTEMBER 18, 2020

In her later years, Justice Ginsburg became something of an international cultural icon — the Internet abounds with RBG memes and Tumblrs, children want to dress up like her on Halloween, and she has even inspired an action figure (Wrath Hover Ginsbot) on The Cartoon Network. CONTINUED ON: P11

9 held, Al-Qaeda module busted in Bengal, Kerala

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi/Kolkata/Kochi

THE National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday busted a Pakistan-sponsored Al-Qaeda module and arrested nine suspected terrorists from West Bengal and Kerala.

A preliminary probe found that the suspects, radicalised by agents based in Pakistan through social media, were preparing to carry out attacks targeting vital installations in multiple locations, including the national capital. In co-ordination with the local police forces, NIA carried out simultaneous early-morning raids in West Bengal's Murshidabad and Kerala's Ernakulam. Six suspects were nabbed from West Bengal and the other three from Kerala. Those arrested in Kerala had migrated there from Bengal. NIA's Kochi unit was monitoring them for a week.

The six arrested from Murshidabad are Najmus Sakib, Abu Sufiyan, Mainul Mondal, Leu Yean Ahmed, Al Mamun Kamal and Atitur Rehman. The three others, rounded up from Kerala, are Murshid Hasan, Iyakub Biswas and Mosaraf Hossen.

The men were in the final stages of procuring arms and ammunitions to carry out the attacks, an NIA official said.

The sleuths recovered sharp weapons, country-made pistols and explosives. P7

CYBERCRIME LINK

Online fraud sees offline drama as Haryana cops pick up youth from Gadag village

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR @Gadag

IT was 12 noon on Friday. The sleepy village of Savadi was all quiet. Suddenly there was commotion. The villagers were jolted out of their wits when they witnessed something straight out of a movie. Four persons who came in a car, forcibly picked up a youth and sped away — not before waving their pistols at the villagers, who came to stop them. The four were actually the police.

Later, the villagers came to know that the youth, Rajahussain Sotnal, was taken by the police of Haryana state for his alleged involvement in an online fraud case. The villagers were stunned by the swift operation of the police.

There was action and drama too before Rajahussain was nabbed. The Haryana police in mufti arrived at Ron on Friday noon and called Rajahussain telling him they had come to offer him money for an online prize he had won. He told them to come near a temple in the village. When he went to the spot, the police asked his details and suddenly pushed him inside the car. The villagers soon gheraoed the vehicle, but the police zoomed off.

Villagers gather in front of the police station in Ron after the arrest of a youth

The villagers didn't know that Rajahussain had allegedly committed a crime that brought the police from a faraway state to nab him here. The police sources said that he was involved in a cybercrime. P7